

## BRIEFS

### MARRIAGE, RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ASSEMBLY SET

JACKSON, Ms. (Special) — The Christian Action Commission (CAC) is hosting an Assembly on Marriage and Religious Liberty on July 20 from 10-11:30 a.m. on the south steps of the Mississippi Capitol in downtown Jackson. Everyone is invited to bring a chair and hear speakers that will include Greg Belser, pastor of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton; Ches Rowland, pastor of Bovina Church, Bovina; Brian Crawford, pastor of Joshua Generation Church, Tallulah, La.; Philip Gandy, state senator and pastor of Liberty Church, Waynesboro; Andy Gipson, state representative and pastor of Gum Springs Church, Braxton; and Brett Golsen of William Carey University in Hattiesburg. There is no charge. For more information, call (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 740-1651, ext. 329. E-mail: info@christianaction.com.

### FISHING IS MINISTRY AT FLORIDA CHURCH

LUTZ, Fl. (Florida Baptist Witness) — Idlewild Church's Fishing, Faith and Fun ministry has taught more than 800 Tampa-area children the fine arts of line knotting, debarbing, worming hooks, and using a rod and reel. Dozens of children also have made professions of faith during the eight-year-old ministry. Jacob Martin, director of recreation outreach at the church in Lutz, Fl., said the ministry is one of the most popular activities for children on the church calendar. "From our perspective, the children learn about fishing, but they also learn about Jesus and what He did for them on the cross. They learn that He loves them." Fishing instruction takes place in the classroom and also along the banks of seven ponds and one lake on Idlewild's property. Each two-and-a-half-hour session includes a devotion led by one of the teachers. At the end of the six-week course, a tournament is held to offer the children the opportunity to earn fishing bragging rights for a year. An awards banquet for the most able fishers is held shortly after the tournament.

## Schools stake positions after ruling

### MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST COLLEGES REACT TO SUPREME COURT MARRIAGE RULING



"Blue Mountain College will continue to uphold the traditional definition of marriage in the application of our policies."



"We teach the traditional Christian and Southern Baptist position on proper sexual relationships and we will continue to do so."



"We have always been committed to the biblical teaching about the sanctity of marriage and we remain committed to that teaching."

**NASHVILLE (BP and local reports)** — Though some Christian colleges and universities are extending benefits to employees' same sex spouses in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's legalization of same sex marriage nationwide, the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) in Washington, D.C., says it sees no legal reason for institutions of higher education to do so.

Shapri LoMaglio, CCCU vice president for government and external relations, told Baptist Press Christian colleges and universities are not obligated by the Supreme Court's June 26 ruling to adapt employment, admissions, or other policies to recognize same sex marriage.

CCCU is an association of 181 intentionally Christ-centered institutions around the world, according to the group's website.

"The court's affirmation of the First Amendment ensures that institutions will be able to maintain policies consistent with their religious convictions," LoMaglio said in e-mail comments. "The new legal status of national same sex marriage paired with the First Amendment can be balanced to ensure that our country affords civil rights to all people, including religious people."

Christian institutions of higher education do not face an immediate threat of losing their tax-exempt status or being held liable for discrimination as long as they "ensure that all of their policies are

clearly tied to their religious beliefs," LoMaglio said.

The three institutions of higher learning affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention issued statements regarding this issue to The Baptist Record.

"Blue Mountain College will continue to uphold the traditional definition of marriage in the application of our policies. Although the Supreme Court's recent decision to legalize same sex marriage may trigger additional decisions that will impact how faith-based institutions operate, we will remain committed to the biblical values upon which our institution was founded," said Barbara McMillin, president of Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain.

McMillin said Blue Mountain College is not a member of CCCU but hopes to secure membership in the near future.

A spokesman for William Carey University in Hattiesburg, which is not a member of CCCU, said, "The administration of William Carey University continues to closely monitor both national and state developments regarding same sex marriage and other issues, including gender identity."

"Carey will follow federal and state law. However, like our colleagues at Union University in Tennessee, we are deeply concerned about the possible implications the Supreme Court's recent ruling may have on Christian colleges. We remain

see RULING on p. 9

## Sudan pastors facing execution if convicted

**JUBA, South Sudan (BP)** — A judge in Sudan has ruled there is enough evidence to charge two pastors with crimes punishable by death.

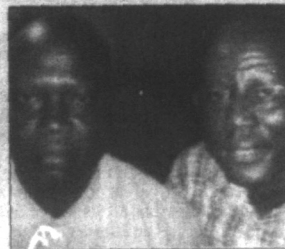
The charges, including espionage and promoting hatred among or against sects, were filed July 2, months after authorities arrested Yat Michael last December and Peter Yein Reith in January, both of South Sudanese origin, for their efforts to encourage a North Khartoum church in the face of a government-aided takeover of the church's property.

Katrina Lantos Swett, chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

(USCIRF), has described the detention of the two pastors as "a clear example of the Sudanese government's persecution of the country's small Christian community," Swett said in a statement in June after initial court proceedings against the two pastors.

"They are on trial simply for demanding and urging their congregation to remain strong in the face of restrictions on their constitutional right to religious freedom," Swett said of the two men, who are part of the Presbyterian Evangelical Church Khartoum Bahri.

see SUDAN on p. 11



**AT RISK** — South Sudanese Christian pastors Yat Michael and Peter Yein Reith, arrested and jailed on trumped-up charges by the Muslim extremists in charge of the Sudan government, are now facing death sentences if convicted of the charges against them. (Photo courtesy of American Center for Law and Justice)

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Same song, infinite verse

**H**erb Frierson (R-Poplarville), chairman of the budget committee in the Mississippi House of Representatives, warned state agency directors last week that if Initiative 42, which would mandate full funding of public schools as called for in the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP), passes in balloting this fall, severe budget cuts at those state agencies will be required.

Frierson says he's serious. Proponents of Initiative 42 accuse him of scare tactics. Interested parties are lining up on both sides of the debate. Stay tuned.

The purpose of this commentary actually has little to do with Initiative 42. It is not being written to endorse nor condemn the proposal, nor commend the good people on either side of the debate. No, this editorial is being written to remind the people of Mississippi, once again, of the promises that were made by our politicians and business leaders when they first sought to ram through legalized gambling and then, years later in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, allowed the massive expansion of gambling in our state.

Remember? Legalized gambling would generate a wide and endless stream of money pouring into government budgets at all levels. Crumbling roads could be freshly paved from here to eternity. Collapsing infrastructure would be miraculously healed.

Mississippians would be lifted out of generational poverty. Abundant jobs would cause unemployment to plummet. Crime would all but disappear. Best of all — no school child would ever again want for anything in pursuit of his/her education.

The sky was the limit. Gambling was going to deliver us. Deliver us from what, you ask? Everything that was bad. Everything that was holding us back. Everything we had been denied.

Everything, but most of all it would free us forever from poor public education.

Switch to the present and observe as our politicians scramble for enough money to fund schools. Watch as supporters of public education become frustrated enough to go through the arduous initiative process just to force legislators to cough up the money they promised years

ago when they passed MAEP. Listen as Dick Hall, transportation commissioner for the central district of Mississippi, lays out the dire underfunding of roadway construction and repair in his district alone.

That's not all. The Washington Post recently published an investigation into the current plight of Tunica County, where legalized gambling was to be the social and economic salvation of one of the poorest counties in the country. Quite the contrary has transpired. The county has endured a massive wave of financial problems, layoffs, fire sales, and closings at the casinos that the politicians and business leaders held in such esteem.

"Despite all the casino money, a county that ranked in the 1980s among the nation's poorest today had one of Mississippi's highest unemployment rates," wrote Post reporter Chico Harlan in assessing the view of modern-day Tunica County from a long-time resident's viewpoint.

A county lashed 30 years ago in a CBS News 60 Minutes segment for its 'apartheid' schools still had a mostly white private academy and a public school system that was 97% black and was given a "D" grade by the state. A county that the Rev. Jesse Jackson once described as 'America's Ethiopia' had changed little in its poorest neighborhoods, even as riverfront casinos and other lavish development had sprouted up along the farmland hugging the Mississippi River.

In effect, nothing had changed. In the interim since Harlan wrote the Post article, the situation has actually gotten worse as Gov. Phil Bryant has been compelled to sign the paperwork approving the takeover by the state of the Tunica public school system.

Legalized gambling has accomplished little long-term good in Mississippi, but it has permanently impoverished many people's souls and, as evidenced in Tunica County, has now begun its long, slow death spiral in the state.

This is an election year in Mississippi. We need to ask every politician who wants us to re-elect him/her, "What happened to the money?" It's a simple question. Shouldn't require a lot of thought. It was a lot of money. Where is it?

If you don't get a direct, reasonable answer, then you have a decision to make in the next few weeks. Pray about it, and vote as the Lord leads.

## Charleston: called to forgive

**A**fter reeling from the atrocious killings in South Carolina, America again dropped its jaw as family members of the victims stood in court and spoke counter-intuitive words of forgiveness to Dylann Roof, who confessed to murdering nine people in Charleston's Emanuel AME Church.

Their testimony of forgiveness shows us that followers of Christ are committed to doing what He commands regardless of how they might feel. As I listened to victims' families speaking, I thought of Jesus' words: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

No one I know has emotions of happiness or sympathy for Dylann Roof. Emotions of raw and angry feelings are bubbling up across the country about such a heinous racist act of violence. There are some like Roxane Gay whose thoughts, "Why I can't forgive Dylann Roof," appeared in *The New York Times* on June 23.

Instead of insisting on why we can't forgive Dylann Roof, Christians must join these family members in extending the forgiveness to Dylann Roof that God extends to us.

Gay says that she is "unwilling to forgive those who show no remorse, who don't demonstrate any interest in reconciliation." Such a statement considers forgiveness to hinge on the "other person," but when God calls us to forgive, the call is not focused on the other person but on us.

With forgiveness, she says, "surely there must be a line." She draws this proverbial line in the sand and says that while there is a place for forgiveness, there is a place where forgiveness cannot happen. For her, the line has been reached.

Extending forgiveness does not negate the senseless and sinful acts of murder, or alleviate the pain which victims' family members or friends now feel. Extending forgiveness does not erase the reality of past or current racism in America. It does not make things right. Extending forgiveness does not bring the dead back to life or bring about justice. Extending forgiveness is not a matter of our politics, but a matter of our hearts.

Gay mentions that media attention surrounding the families' responses implies that some believe forgiveness to be "a way



**Guest opinion**  
with Todd Brady

to make sense of the incomprehensible." Hardly. Christians do not forgive in order to make sense of the incomprehensible. Christians forgive because God commands it and Jesus modeled it.

We are to bear with one another, "and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." Not only are Christians called to forgive one another, Christians are to forgive "as the Lord has forgiven you" (Colossians 3:13).

My forgiveness of others is to mirror God's forgiveness of me. When the world sees how I forgive, they are to see how God forgives.

God did not show forgiveness to me only after I asked for it. Likewise, God did not extend forgiveness to me because I had earned it. On the contrary, He freely gave it in spite of what I had done. God granted forgiveness not because, as Gay says, "we must atone for our sins," but because He Himself atoned for my sins through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ.

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

God has crossed the line we might imagine. He has provided forgiveness for us in Christ. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). No one is beyond the reach of God's forgiveness.

Legal proceedings must now take place. Justice must be served. While we may not know all that will happen, this one thing I know: God can forgive Dylann Roof, and so must I.

Brady is vice president for university ministries and assistant professor of ministry at Union University in Jackson, TN. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

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# Iran to release pastor imprisoned since 2010

**KARAJ, Iran (BP)** — Pastor Farshid Fathi, imprisoned in Iran for his faith since 2010, has been granted a Dec. 10 release two years earlier than expected from the notoriously brutal Rajai Shahr prison, Elam Ministries has announced.

Ann Buwalda, a board member of the Iranian-led ministry that engages in evangelism and discipleship in the Mideast nation, called the early release "positive news which has greatly encouraged Farshid and his family. We join them in praising God for this development and for those who have made it possible."

The reason for the early release was not given, but Fathi

was informed July 4 of his new release date, and the news was revealed to the public two days later, Elam Ministries reported.

Fathi had been imprisoned since his arrest the day after Christmas 2010 at his home in Tehran. He was originally taken to Evin prison. In a February 2012 trial, he was convicted of "action against the national security," after being accused of "cooperating with foreign organizations and evangelism," Elam Ministries said.

His original sentence of six years was extended by a year in December 2014 on false charges. He had been injured in an attack by Evin prison guards

on April 17, 2014, and was transferred to the Rajai Shahr prison in August 2014 for unknown reasons.

In the attack in April 2014 — the Thursday before Easter — an officer broke Fathi's foot and toe and denied him medical treatment until Easter Sunday. With his foot in a cast, Fathi sent a message of forgiveness to Christians praying for his safety.

"Of course, we forgive them for all they have done to us because we are the followers of the One who says, 'Father, please forgive them because they don't know what they are doing,'" Fathi wrote, according to a letter posted on Elam Ministries' website. "So my dear friends, please in these days pray for me that I may know

"Of course, we forgive them for all they have done to us because we are the followers of the One who says, 'Father, please forgive them because they don't know what they are doing.' So my dear friends, please in these days pray for me that I may know Him and be found in Him and the power of resurrection."

**Farshid Fathi**

**imprisoned pastor**

Him and be found in Him and the power of resurrection."

Buwalda requested continued prayer for Fathi as he nears his release. His wife and two daughters have lived in Canada since 2013. According to Elam Ministries, Fathi is among an

estimated 90 Christians imprisoned in Iran as punishment for their faith.

Elam Ministries, based in Alpharetta, Ga., lists its mission on its website as, "to strengthen and expand the church in the Iran region and beyond."

## Free rodeo event leads lost to salvation in N.C.

**ARCHDALE, N.C. (BP)** — Roping calves and riding bulls aren't generally associated with church congregations, but Triad Cowboy Church (TCC) places a high priority on offering a free evangelistic rodeo to the local cowboy community.

"It's just a good, clean, multi-hour event that a family can go to," said pastor Doug Davis, pastor of the church in Archdale, N.C. "We provide everything. Rodeo is something people are attracted to."

This year's rodeo attracted more than 3,000 people and resulted in 121 professions of faith and 249 rededications. During the worship service, Davis shared an evangelistic message and invited commitments. Some filled out cards, which were then placed in buckets, but others came forward in the arena to pray and make public decisions.

Those who made commitments were given a cowboy-themed New Testament Bible and a booklet called, *Living in Christ*.

This was the first time the church offered a public altar call during the worship service and held a public baptism. Five members agreed to be baptized by Davis and Jim King, TCC's associate pastor, in a water trough on a trailer towed by a truck into the arena.

David said the stands filled up for the baptisms. "For the first time it was like a holy hush fell over the entire arena," Davis said. "People were not talking. People were totally engrossed in the baptism. It was absolutely unbelievable."

Decisions will be sorted and shared with pastors in Randolph Association or the appropriate Baptist associations elsewhere for follow-up.

Rodeo events included team roping, mutton busting, greased pig chases, barrel racing, and bull riding. Outside the arena, volunteers set up kids' slides and bounce houses and had a train to ride. The only cost was for food, which the group tries to keep affordable.

Davis said the rodeo takes all year to plan and costs more than \$10,000.



**RODEO SALVATION** — Doug Davis (right) and Jim King baptize Chelsea Kindall during Triad Cowboy Church's annual rodeo in Archdale, N.C. Unlike other rodeos that charge as much as \$25 for admittance, this one is free. (BP submitted photo)

Purse prizes are given to winners of the professional events. The church also held a drawing for an iPad.

Former world champion bull rider Jerome Davis and his wife Tiffany (no relation to pastor Doug Davis) host the event on their property where they raise livestock for rodeos. Jerome Davis was paralyzed in a 1998 bull riding accident.

The Davises and most of TCC's members volunteer to help with the event. The church's flag team performed and a member sang the national anthem.

"Just about the entire church is involved," Doug Davis said. "This is a major deal. It takes a lot of hands on deck to pull this off."

The event began at a time when the economy was struggling, Davis said.

Typical rodeo events cost \$25 per person for adults and about \$10 for children, but he said TCC wanted to offset those costs as much as possible. They recruit sponsors, who are recognized for their contributions. The larger sponsors are allowed to set up displays, but they can't sell anything. In seeking to optimize the outreach each year, Davis said, "We blanket our community" for support.

It is interesting as you read Scripture to see how many times the Bible describes living the Christian life as going to battle. The apostle Paul was extremely conscious of the military that was around him and sometimes guarding him, and he would advise us by saying things like, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood" (Eph. 6:12) and he goes on to explain there is a greater enemy than just those around us who may seem to oppose us. He outlines for us at one point that we, like most going to battle, need to be properly equipped and dressed and he outlines all the things that we need. "Put on the whole armor of God" (Eph. 6:10), he says.

Today, without question, Christians are in a battle. Probably never in centuries have Christians been under greater attack than now. The news is constantly telling of Christians who are captured, killed, some decapitated, and others thrown into waters to drown and some simply shot. Men, women, young people, small children, Christians destroyed. While we may think that is somewhere else and not even remotely connected to our world, it is probably important to stop and look around, for in our culture now principles of the Christian faith and clear teachings of the truth of Scripture are often rejected and ridiculed.

Things we used to hold in faith as unshakeable truth have been set aside, scoffed at, and redefined. Just over the last few years we have watched as drug use has gone from an evil, disruptive force to legalized, accepted forms of recreation. We have watched as biblical marriage of a man and a woman is talked about in terms of traditional marriage, and then discussed in terms of what's tradition to you is not tradition to me and marriage being pressed forward as same sex or group relationships or basically whatever you feel like is right for you is what is actually right for you. Since the people of God



## Battle Plans

are caught up in a war that calls for our best all the time, it might be good for us to know some important priorities and rules of battle.

The first thing you need to remember as you focus on the enemy is that it is not all about you. There are others involved, but you are needed to focus on doing what you can do to make a difference. But in any battle, the issues, the conflict, the outcome is far larger than just you or me. We live in an "I, me, mine" world, but in the Kingdom, we are a part of a great people and a great army and it doesn't involve you or me alone.

Recently, some of our U.S. troops were being honored because of their valor and heroics in battle. As they were interviewed before the ceremonies, one of the soldiers said that one of the main things you have to keep in mind in battle is the person to your right and the person to your left. You not only have a responsibility for yourself but what are they facing and how can you help. What if they get hurt or wounded or even killed? How does that change your place and plan? You cannot go into battle without caring about the person

on your left and on your right. If you do, you may quickly find the person on your right or left doesn't care about you either and with that thought permeating the troops, the battle will certainly be lost. Not only must you care about the person on the right and on the left, but you need to be ready to cover their backs and have the confidence that they will cover your back.

Our enemy has no concern and no scruples about shooting people in the back, and if there's no one in your life and circle of friends and influence and church who care enough about you to cover your back, you will probably get shot. How do you go about doing that, covering somebody's back? Well, it usually takes place when somebody is attacking another person and they may not even be aware of it. They come from the back side, guns blazing, critical words spewed, misinformation and innuendos about life told and nobody says anything about it or defends a person from this backside attack.

How long has it been since you saw a fellow believer, maybe a Sunday school teacher, maybe a deacon, maybe a pastor, maybe a friend who had been in the

limelight of life and someone was taking them to task and criticizing them and cutting them to shreds. Did you step up? Did you say anything? Did you, out of a relationship that is positive and good, say, "I don't think that's correct and I don't think you need to be saying all of that"? Sad to say that oftentimes in battles today, people often get caught on the right or the left or even attacked from behind and nobody does anything or says anything to cover them or defend them. You may think, "Well, it's none of my business." What if you were in the same situation and were attacked from behind? Do you think it would be your fellow soldier's and friend's business to help you? Probably so and you'd probably be right, so do it for them.

Occasionally, someone will take a strong stand for a biblical position related to morals or abortion or marriage and all of a sudden in this world of flash-pan media, it spreads everywhere and often Christians, about the only thing they can come up with is, "What do you think about what she did?" Instead of saying, "You know, I don't know all of the things involved in that skirmish, but I do admire them for standing up for good things, for right things, for people who have right positions and right hearts."

It takes courage to go to battle. It takes courage to care about your fellow soldiers, and it takes an enormous amount of courage and care and discipline to respond to something when you can turn your head and pretend that nothing is happening. You and I are needed today. Step up to the task. Watch those on your right and left who may need you and cover the backs of folks wherever you can. The Lord will bless you as you stay true, and stay in the battle.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

## Revivals & Homecomings

► **Pineview Church, Laurel:** Homecoming, July 19; service, 10 a.m., followed by dinner on the ground; Freddie Odum, speaker; Scarlett Sanders, music.

► **Heucks Retreat Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming, July 19; service, 10 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Thad Owens, Jr., speaker; Tommy Owens, music; Ken Parvin, pastor.

► **Pleasant Grove Church, Brookhaven:** Revival, July 19 - 24; Matt Buckles, speaker; Harvey Magee, music.

► **Doty Springs Church, Attala Association:** Revival, July 19 - 22; Sun., 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Wade Stevens, speaker; Josh Bufford, music; Daniel Fortenberry, pastor.

► **Mars Hill Church, Amite County:** Bicentennial celebration and revival, July 19 - 22; Sun., registration, coffee, and doughnuts, 9:30 a.m.; service, 10:30 a.m.; Larry Fields and Bruce Fields leading in worship; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Joel Williams, Adrian Fairchild, and Victor Walsh, speakers; Randy Carruth, music.

► **Pleasant Hill Church, New Hebron:** Revival, July 20 - 23, 7 p.m. nightly; Gene Douglas, speaker; Todd McDaniel, music.

► **First Church, Belzoni:** Revival, July 19 - 22; Sun., 1- a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., noon and 7 p.m.; Campers on Mission, leaders; George C. Johnson, pastor.

► **New Home Church, Scott Association:** Revival, July 19 - 22; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Mon. - Wed., 7:40 p.m.; Mark Gregory, speaker; Jack Hollingsworth, music; Billy McKay, pastor.

► **Holcomb Church, Holcomb:** 100th year anniversary, July 19; service, 11 a.m., followed by potluck lunch; several guest speakers; Kevin Tribble, pastor.

► **First Church, Sartoria:** Homecoming, July 19; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Barry Ward, speaker; Ronnie Cottingham, music.

► **Star Church, Star:** Revival, July 19 - 22, 7 p.m.; Billy Joe Pierce, speaker; Price Harris, music.

► **Holly Springs Church, Foxworth:** Revival, July 19 - 24; Sun., 11 a.m., followed

by dinner on the grounds; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; Jon Daniels, speaker; inspiration chalk talk and music; Tim Morrison; Dave Nichols, pastor.

► **Longview Church, Starkville:** Revival, July 19 - 22, 6 p.m. nightly; Dan Robertson, speaker; Jane Robertson, music; Larry W. Yarbber, pastor.

► **Victory Church, Basefield:** Revival, July 19 - 22; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Brett Gholson, speaker; Lyn Holloway, music; Nathan Barber, pastor.

► **Silver Creek Church, McComb:** Revival, July 19 - 22; Sun., 10:45 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and 1:15 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Mike Morris, speaker; pastor Mike Moak, music.

► **Mt. Vernon Church, Liberty:** Homecoming, July 19; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by covered dish dinner; Scott Capleman, speaker; Steve Bishop, music; Jerry Causey, pastor.

► **Hickory Grove Church, Lamar:** Revival, July 19 - 24; Sun., 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon service; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; Brad Ford, speaker.

## BIBL i O C I P H E R

MPATEO, YAP OLJX NTFF, XLBYA

YAP ETWO RTO, YALY B HBEE XPSO L

QLFBSP BS YAP EL SO, STY L QLFBSP TQ

MWPLO, STW L YABWXY QTW HLYPW,

MZY TQ APLWBSR YAP HTWOX TQ YAP

ETWO.

LFTX PBRAY: PEPGPS

Clue:  $X = I$

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 16:32

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005



## Just for the Record



Children from **SPRINGFIELD CHURCH, MORTON**, attended a mission camp at Central Hills Baptist Retreat June 25 - 27.



**NEW HENLEYFIELD CHURCH, CARRIERE**, honored its men on Father's Day.



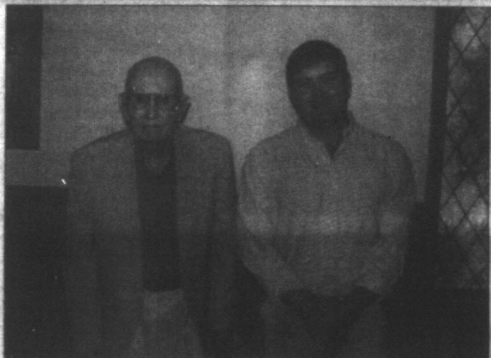
**TUCKERS CROSSING CHURCH, LAUREL**, honored graduates Alex Ellzey, Hunter McLemore, and Dakota Forbes, shown with pastor Eddie Bryant.



**CANAAN CHURCH, COLUMBUS**, recognized Bill Robinson for 40 years of faithful service as deacon. Shown are Robinson, Danny Avery, and John Hill.



**GOOD HOPE CHURCH, RICHTON**, ordained Josh Freeman to the Gospel ministry. He is shown with pastor Woody Baughn.



**MT. PLEASANT CHURCH, GLOSTER**, honored oldest father G. B. Steele and youngest father Dele Floyd on Father's Day.



**CUMBERLAND CHURCH, MABEN**, ordained Charlie Wellham II as their new pastor. Shown are Donnie Buckner, Wellham, and Wade Stevens.



**NEW HOPE CHURCH, WALNUT GROVE**, held a baby dedication June 17. Shown are pastor Michael Harper, parents Hannah Moore & Trent Travis with daughter Rivers Mae Travis.

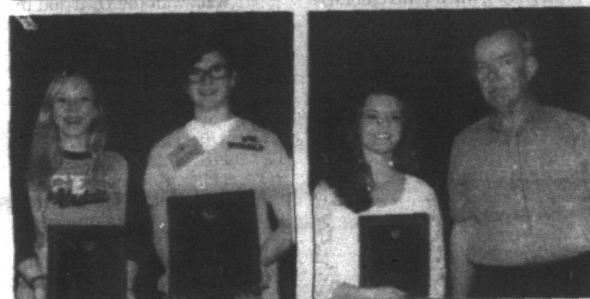


Children from **FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA**, recently spent a few days at Kid's Camp at Shocco Springs near Talladega, Ala.



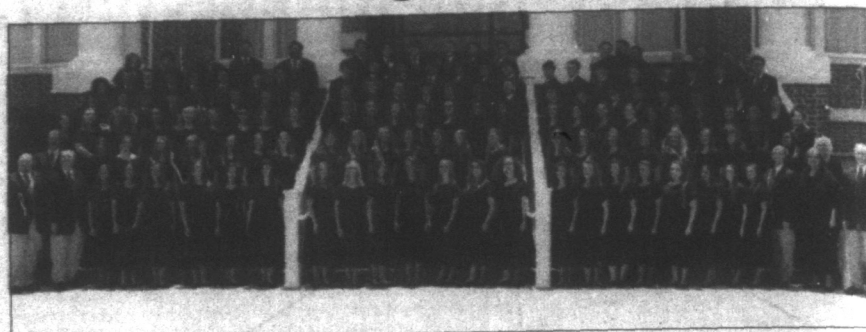
The children of **NESHOBA CHURCH, UNION**, attended CentriKid camp June 22 - 26.

## 2015 State Bible Drill Selection Tournament Winners



Students from across Mississippi participated in the Bible Drill State Selection Tournament at Ridgecrest Church, Madison. 1. The **FRIENDS OF BIBLE DRILL** award was presented to Randy and Donna Mobley, Church Road Church, Horn Lake. They are shown with Marcus Peagler (right), director, Discipleship & Family Ministry Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. 2. **HIGH SCHOOL TOURNAMENT** winners are Jessica Lang, Cleary Church, Florence, 2nd place, left; Mick Gill, First Church, Byhalia, 1st place, right (photo 1); and Anna Eliese Langley, Prentiss Church, 3rd place, shown with Peagler (photo 2). 3. **NINE YEAR SCHOLARSHIP** winners are, from left, Leah Boxx, First Church, Coffeeville, 3rd place; Anna Eliese Langley, Prentiss Church, 1st place; Bailey Beard, Fairview Church, Columbus, 2nd place; and, not shown, Hannah Parker, Trinity Church, Fulton, 4th place. 4. **MIDDLE SCHOOL TOURNAMENT** winners are, from left, Aaron Phillips, Hope Church, Neshoba Association, 1st place (tie); Hannah Jackson, First Church, Wiggins, 3rd place (tie); Anna Kerley, Prentiss Church, Prentiss, 3rd place (tie); Sarah Boxx, First Church, Coffeeville, 3rd place (tie); and Natalie Sumrall, Grace Church, Rankin Association, 1st place (tie).

## College News



Pictured are participants in the Mississippi Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra rehearsal camp at the **WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY** Hattiesburg campus from June 8-11. All-State consists of 146 ninth through 12th graders selected from around Mississippi through an audition and interview process.

**BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE** received the Southern States Athletic Conference Sportsmanship Award in men's sports. During the 2014-15 season, BMC won team sportsmanship awards in men's basketball and golf, thereby earning the most points for the overall award. Coaches pictured: Austin Kimbrough and Curt Fowler, baseball; Danny McKenzie, men's golf; J.D. Parker, men's basketball; Phillip Laney, cross country.



Members of the **PEARL RIVER ASSOCIATION**, headquartered in McNeill, traveled the length of the state to Blue Mountain College and spent the first week of June transforming the former BMC Campus Store into the college's new Admission Offices.

Barbara McMillin, **BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE** president, is pictured with the recently inducted 2015-2016 Student Body Association officers (l to r): John Richard, vice president; McMillin; Derek Hunter, president; James Baker, secretary/treasurer.



**BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE'S** Baptist Student Union held its annual Commissioning Service for students serving as summer missionaries and summer workers. Eleven BMC students will be serving as summer missionaries in the United States and five will be in foreign countries. A total of 15 BMC students will be working in Mississippi at Baptist camps and Student Life conferences.



# Futral reflects on service in smaller churches

**Editors Note:** The Baptist Record recently asked Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) to consider his ministry in smaller churches. MBCB is presenting "Celebrate the Small Strong Congregation," a conference at First Church, Jackson, Sept. 24. Futral puts the conference in the context of what it means to pastor a smaller church.

**RECORD:** In Mississippi Baptist life, what makes the smaller membership church so important?

**FUTRAL:** The question begs for an answer that I am unable to give simply because a follow up question would be, "What church is not important?" If you were to listen to Jesus in His letters to the churches of Asia you would discover that the "big" churches with all the bells and whistles and activities going on were the ones that received some very direct criticism from Jesus. "You claim that you're alive but you're dead. You are lukewarm and I would rather that you be hot or cold." Jesus recognized that sheer numbers do not make a great church. Multiple activities do not make a church great or large, but whether the church has big numbers or small, their relationship to Jesus, their faithfulness to Him, and their heart for a world

that is lost without Him makes all the difference.

**RECORD:** What are the benefits of being a pastor of a smaller membership church?

**FUTRAL:** I guess the best way that I can deal with the second question is to reach into my own personal mile of walking with Jesus, for I spent most of my growing up years in small churches. My dad was a pastor but never the pastor of a megachurch. What today would be described as a small church was generally where he served, preached, loved, baptized, encouraged folks. Generally speaking, my dad was the only staff member. The only other work and staff positions were filled by people who volunteered to work with the choir or the youth or special activities that we would have. There's a lot to be said for that kind of environment. Rather than people just sitting back and paying somebody to do the work, and watching them perform the majority of the time, it was hands on, getting ready for Vacation Bible School or the kick off a new Sunday school year, a banquet, or promotion of the budget. It all came because people would involve themselves in what they saw as kingdom work in their church. That is still vital, whatever size church. The numbers may

reflect that people be engaged, involved, personally fulfilled, and personally responsible for some piece of kingdom work.

**RECORD:** What unique challenges does a pastor of a smaller membership church face?

**FUTRAL:** As one of those pastors for many years, I would say that one of the great, reoccurring challenges is to find people who will respond and volunteer and harness up to do a work with faithfulness and effectiveness. They should let God use them, finding Sunday school teachers, committee members, workers. It was always a constant challenge, and I thought that it was unique to where I was. In time, when I became pastor of a larger church in numbers and size of budget and those kinds of things, I discovered that the same dilemma existed in trying to help people understand their role in being engaged in doing what God has called us as a people to do.

**RECORD:** What positive aspects are there of pastoring a smaller church?

**FUTRAL:** For me personally, I must confess that I would not take anything for the blessings and the privilege that I was given to be pastor of a church that would not

be considered one of the biggest churches in the land. Oh, the blessings and the good things that God did in my life because I was touched by those congregations. Over fifty years ago a small church on a dirt road in Tippah County contacted me and asked me to come preach a trial sermon. I went and preached one Sunday and used my two best sermons. I say my two best because I only had about two, and they called me. I am confident they had no idea of what they were getting. I was as green as a gourd, wet behind the ears, wide-eyed young preacher. Neither did I know what I was getting when I was embraced by a loving congregation who literally, honestly held me up to the Father and asked God to use my life. They listened to me struggle when I would come to the pulpit. They watched as I did everything a pastor does, but I was doing it for the very first time. I baptized my first person, married my first couple, had my first funeral, enjoyed the blessings of my first revival, went to the very first deacon's meeting I had ever been in, led in my first Vacation Bible School, my first Lord's Supper, and on and on the list goes. I can only imagine what they must have been thinking as I, with fear and trembling, walked through those and many other events with them. In the midst

of it all, that smaller church with that gigantic heart loved me and helped me.

**RECORD:** How can pastors of smaller churches encourage and support each other?

**FUTRAL:** In the many years that I was pastor of what would be considered a small church, I admired preachers in the great big churches and appreciated so many of them who more than just took notice of this young whippersnapper of a preacher. They had time to talk to me, to treat me as one of their peers and encourage me in my walk with the Lord and my ministry. I had many friends who were pastors of churches like mine, and we were a blessing to each other then and now. Of course, none of us knew that we were pastors of small churches, because we thought that God had called us and blessed us with the greatest experience of life. Sometimes, it is not the way we look at our churches, but the way we see ourselves in our calling and our walk with God that give us a sense of identity and worth. I honestly then nor now know what a big church is or really what a small church is. I only know that I am so deeply grateful for the journey that He has allowed me to walk and the opportunities that He has given me to serve.



**Celebrate  
the SMALL  
STRONG  
CONGREGATION**

**SEPTEMBER 24, 2015**  
**First Baptist Church, Jackson**

## YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS!

You need to mark the date on your calendar and make plans to come and be ready to be blessed. In Mississippi, we have no little churches. Just ahead is the date that we are going to gather together and celebrate the small strong congregations across Mississippi. In one of our sister Southern states, the state government has an ad campaign that says in their state, "Small business is big business." In Mississippi, our strong small churches are big Kingdom business. Mark it down.

Jim Futral,  
Executive Director-  
Treasurer  
MBCB

## SCHEDULE

9:15 a.m.	Registration
10:10 a.m.	Welcome & Instructions
10:20 a.m.	Session 1 The Power of the Small Dr. Chuck Lawless Table Talk
11:48 a.m.	Lunch
	Resource Distribution
12:54 p.m.	Session 2 Guarding the Heart for Effective Ministry Dr. Chuck Lawless Table Talk
1:34 p.m.	Session 3 - Outside the Walls Dr. Chuck Lawless Table Talk
2:54 p.m.	Session 4 - Groups Matter Dr. Chuck Lawless Table Talk

## PLENARY

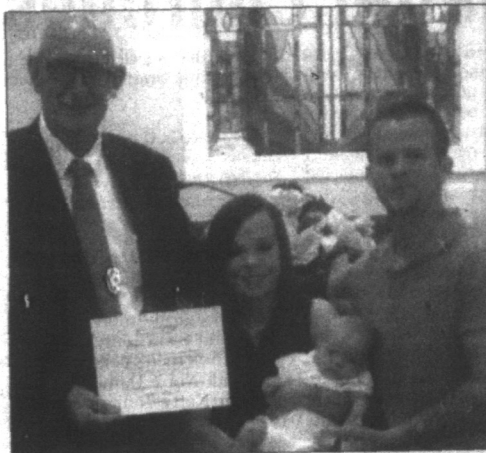
**Dr. Chuck Lawless**

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## Just for the Record



**CRYSTAL RIDGE CHURCH, LOUISVILLE**, held a baby dedication for Stephen Hunter Dewberry June 21. He is shown with parents Chase and Kayla Dewberry and pastor Charles Rook.



**GOSS CHURCH, COLUMBIA**, celebrated the 30th anniversary of service by their pastor, Mark McArthur. He and his wife Gail were given a treasure chest full of notes of encouragement and a week-long Caribbean cruise.



**CENTER CHURCH, KOSCIUSKO**, ordained James Hudgins as deacon May 3. Shown with Hudgins is his wife, Wanda, and Benny Adams, Robert Pettit, Gary Russell, pastor Jeffery Hutchison, and AMD Steve Jordan.



Fifth and sixth grade girls from **MONTICELLO CHURCH, MONTICELLO**, made blueberry jelly. The girls were given a jar to take home and delivered other jars to shut-ins.



Members of **EAST MOSS POINT CHURCH, MOSS POINT**, honored their fathers, living or deceased, by displaying framed photos on Father's Day. Shown are Roy Lang and pastor David Abbott.



**NEW HOPE CHURCH, WALNUT GROVE**, held a baby dedication May 24. Shown are Josh & Shannon Brown with their son, Lawson, and pastor Michael Harper.



**FAIR RIVER CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN**, honored Amy Anderson (mother with most children present) and Ida Mae Lofton (oldest mother) on Mother's Day. Also honored were the house mothers of the Baptist Children's Village Dickerson Place: Brenda Schexnayder, Linda Peoples, and Patsy Gilmore (not shown). Jay Anderson, pastor.



**GRACE CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, joined with Woodmen Life to donate nonperishable foods to the community storehouse food pantry May 9.



Students from **FRENCH CAMP CHURCH, FRENCH CAMP**, spent a week at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center.

### In other Church News:

► **First Church, Runnelstown**, will host Squire Parsons in concert July 18, 7 p.m. Love offering. Parsons will also preach July 19, 10 a.m.

► **New Zion Church, Braxton**, is hosting a Beth Moore Living Proof Live Simulcast Sept. 12, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Cost, \$40, which includes lunch and an afternoon break. Limited to 150; first come, first served.



## RULING

cont. from p. 1

mindful of ongoing developments in these areas."

In February of this year, the board of trustees for William Carey University approved a resolution adopting the Baptist Faith and Message of the

Southern Baptist Convention as part of the school's Statement of Faith and Practice. Section XVII of the Baptist Faith and Message defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

Lee Royce, president of Mississippi College in Clinton, which holds CCCU membership, said, "Our positions and policies

have not changed in light of the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling. We teach the traditional Christian and Southern Baptist position on proper sexual relationships and we will continue to do so."

LoMaglio pointed out, "At this point, there is no reason to believe that religious institutions, who do immense good by educating first-generation and low-income students, providing thousands of hours of volunteer time to their communities, and are institutions essential to the fabric of their communities, would be targeted to be penalized in this way for their longstanding religious beliefs. The test for tax-exemption is public good, and our institutions absolutely serve the public good."

Belmont University in Nashville, which still describes itself

"At this point, there is no reason to believe that religious institutions ... would be targeted to be penalized in this way for their longstanding religious beliefs. The test for tax-exemption is public good, and our institutions absolutely serve the public good."

Shapri LoMaglio

CCCU vice president  
for government and external relations

a Christian institution after severing ties with the Tennessee Baptist Convention in 2007, and Hope College in Holland, Mi., which is affiliated with the Reformed Church of America, say they are offering benefits to the spouses of all legally married employees, including same sex spouses. Neither is affiliated with CCCU.

After same sex marriage was legalized in Indiana last fall, the University of Notre Dame, a Catholic institution in South Bend, and Saint Mary's College, a private women's college associated with Notre Dame and situated on Notre Dame's campus, both granted health care and other benefits to same sex couples, Christianity Today reported.

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## CLASSIFIEDS

**POPULAR HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON, TENNESSEE IS SEARCHING FOR A FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF YOUTH AND RECREATION.** We are seeking someone with at least a college degree and 2 years of experience in the area of youth and/or recreation. Send resume to Associate Pastor Search Committee, Popular Heights Baptist Church, 1980 Hollywood Drive, Jackson, Tennessee 38305, or freida@popularheights.com

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## MS POSITIONS

**BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE AREA IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME CHRISTIAN, COMPASSIONATE CHURCH SECRETARY** with a minimum of 1 year experience performing general office work. Excellent computer knowledge and telephone skills will be a plus. Resumes will ONLY be accepted by mail. Search Committee, 510 Lake Valley Drive, Starkville, MS 39759 or by e-mail: sr\_parks@bellsouth.net

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SUMRALL, MISS., SEEKS FULL-TIME MINISTER TO CHILDREN/DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES.** Bachelor's degree required (seminary preferred); prior experience working with children and in congregational or organizational setting required (experience as children's minister or equivalent preferred). Send resume and cover letter to office@fbcsumrall.org

**BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, A SMALL COUNTRY CHURCH BETWEEN DREW AND RULEVILLE, MISS. IN SUNFLOWER COUNTY, IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF VOCATIONAL PASTOR.** Please send resumes to P.O. Box 249, Drew, Miss. 38737.

**VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH, IN THE LINCOLN COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, IS IN NEED OF A PASTOR.** If interested, please submit your resume to Billy Britt, 1606 Douglas Trail, S.E., Brookhaven, MS 39601.

**SOUTH MCCOMB BAPTIST IS CURRENTLY SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER TO LEAD AND SERVE.** Email all resumes to smbc01@bellsouth.net

**NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH IN FOXWORTH, MISSISSIPPI IS SEEKING AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR.** If interested please submit resume to Associate pastor search committee, c/o New Hope Baptist Church, 508 New Hope Church Road, Foxworth, MS 39483.

**EASTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH IN INDIANOLA, MS IS IN SEARCH OF A FULL-TIME PASTOR.** Please send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 466, Indianola, Ms 38751 or e-mail to Shirley Betts at s.betts@bellsouth.net

**POSITION OPENING: PART-TIME CHURCH SECRETARY/BOOKKEEPER.** New Night Baptist Church, Brookhaven, MS. Please email resumes to newsightbc@cableone.com or mail to 629 Forest Trail NE, Brookhaven, MS 39601.

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

# THE VILLAGE VIEW



**Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director**

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## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

**MAY 2015**

### MEMORIALS

Marilyn Graham  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul W. Allen  
Edna Grantham  
Charley Edwards  
Mark Smith  
Robin Grantham  
Lisa Miller Grantham  
Hon. & Mrs. Jess H. Dickinson  
Shelby Grubbs  
Mr. & Mrs. William D. Nutt  
John Guyton  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
J. C. Hadaway  
Mr. & Mrs. Weldon F. Kyle  
Larry Hawley  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy W. Hardy  
Mr. Alan L. Freeman  
Elma Heffner  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack G. Virden  
Jean Hitt  
Miller & Lou Bankston  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry D. Glass  
Wendy Champion Hood  
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E. Champion  
Eldon Hopf  
Mr. & Mrs. Bubba Foster  
Travis Hurst  
Mr. & Mrs. Byron Dean  
Billie Jackson  
Mr. & Mrs. Hugh L. Jackson  
Mildred Jackson  
Siloam BC  
Mary Catherine Jernigan  
Mr. & Mrs. Doc Oakman  
Mrs. Irene Johnson  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Ruth V. Johnson  
Mr. & Mrs. George H. Crawford, Jr.  
Jimmy Johnston  
Liberty HS Class of 1962  
Charles Jones  
Mr. & Mrs. Byron Kyle

Jamie Louise Boswell Jones  
Ms. Margaret A. Patrick  
Mr. Johnny Jones  
Mr. & Mrs. George M. Eagle  
Mr. L. V. Jones  
Patricia & Annie Pearl Triplett  
Ann T. Kennedy  
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Loveless  
Catherine Kent  
Mr. & Mrs. Byron Kyle  
Jean Hearn King  
Ms. Joyce King  
Mrs. Marguerite King  
Mike, Janis & Ben Goff  
Mr. & Mrs. Percy J. Peeler  
Barry Lackey  
McCool BC  
Gordon Ladner  
Juniper Grove BC, Ruth SSC  
Mr. Ronald Lafon  
Mr. & Mrs. Wilburn H. Lowery  
Joan Marie Latham  
Ms. Mary Margaret Adams  
Robert G. (Bobby) Lilly  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank O. Crosthwait, Jr.  
Carrie Lipscomb  
Mr. & Mrs. H. B. McKnight  
Unity BC, Adult 3 SSC  
Carrie Leigh Thurman  
Lipscomb  
Mr. & Mrs. James E. Harrington  
Shell Livingston  
Mr. & Mrs. Byron Kyle  
Katherine Lott  
Holcomb BC  
Tommy Lovern  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan  
Tommy Lucius  
Mrs. Nancy G. Parker & Gail Gayle Magness  
Mrs. Pauline Corban  
Margie Gayle Magness  
Mr. & Mrs. Buddy Rowland  
Mrs. Maude Maness

Mrs. Willie Grace Myatt  
Ada Mangin  
Stanton BC  
Bessie Dee Martin  
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel A. Smith  
Mrs. Frances Grani Mason  
Dr. & Mrs. F. David Rives  
Mrs. Louise S. Hisscox  
Dorsey Wayne Maxwell  
Tony Rogers  
Cynthia B. McDonald  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
John W. McFarland  
Eddiceton BC  
Mary Hazel McGaugh  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul W. Allen  
Mrs. Inez McKinion  
Mr. & Mrs. Mark E. Gunn  
Mother of Elsie B. McLemore  
Mrs. Elsie B. McLemore  
Raymond McRee  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul W. Allen  
Lucile Mikell  
Miss Lucy Mikell  
Mrs. Mabel Miller  
Dr. & Mrs. Jay L. Hubbard  
Martha Monte  
Mr. Alan L. Freeman  
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Mrs. Fred E. Tatum  
Mr. Lonnie Sims

Ms. Pat White  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Chen Gong Sit  
Mr. & Mrs. Doc Oakman  
Mrs. Annie Elizabeth "Lib" Skee  
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Mr. Chip Mikell  
Mrs. Betty J. Duncan  
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Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Buchanan  
Laura Smith  
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Mrs. Margaret Smith  
Concord BC  
Mrs. Cheryl Case  
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Shirley Speights  
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Ms. Kim Vickers  
Walshall BC



Mr. Paul Lee, representing the Clarke College Alumni Association, presents a check in memory of Juanita West, who was twice a faculty member of Clarke College and very involved in the work at Camp Garaywa in Clinton, MS, to Dr. Rory Lee, BCV Executive Director, to provide a scholarship for a female resident to attend Camp Garaywa this summer. To learn more about the Clarke College Alumni Association please visit [www.clarkecollege.com](http://www.clarkecollege.com)

Annie Lee Walker  
Emma Tillman  
Mr. Hugh Ellis Walker  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Mrs. Tommie Jean Wallace  
Lou Bullock & Libby Bullock  
French  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles E. Blackwell  
Mrs. Mary J. Henderson

Cecil Edwin Washington  
Mr. & Mrs. John Hobbs  
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Cothran  
Ms. Betty J. Montesi  
Ann Welborn  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul W. Allen  
Dr. Mitchell B. Wells  
Mr. & Mrs. B. R. Taylor  
Mr. & Mrs. F. R. Clark

## BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at [ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com](mailto:ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com) or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com).



## Jesus' Revelation • Revelation 1:1-8

It is probably not what the Apostle John had anticipated. The last years of his life, I mean. The remaining survivor of the original disciples of Christ was exiled on the small, barren island of Patmos. For punishment, the Roman authorities had banished John the remote location due to his faith in Jesus and growing influence. They must have figured if John was out of their sight, he would not be much of an inspiration to anyone. If he was alone, they assumed he would have no lasting impact. They could not have been more wrong. Not only would God use some of John's final years to draw him closer to Christ, He would also providentially use John's time of exile at Patmos to share one of the most powerful and beautiful portions of Scripture we have in our possession.

Up until this point in our studies together, we have explored the themes of love, the dangers of false doctrine and the uniqueness of Christ as described in 1 John. Beginning this week, our journey takes a turn to the Book of Revelation. Revelation, (no "s" at the end) may not be the most read section of Scripture in the Bible, but it is definitely the most debated and the one most filled with symbolism and subject to various interpretations. It will not be the purpose of

the lessons in your study guides or this commentary to provide an exhaustive or comprehensive study of Revelation. The intention of the second-half of this summer quarter is to highlight the common thread of Christ and His ultimate victory. With all the many positions scholars and laity take based on the book of Revelation, the theme of Christ victorious should be the most prominent. For in the end, Christ will indeed reign and those that belong to Him will have an eternity to abide in His presence.

As a fellow student and teacher of God's word, I know this could probably go without saying, but it is important to note the first five words in the book of Revelation. They read, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 1:1) Do not lose sight of those handful of words. So much of what we believe pertaining to Revelation is based on commentary and personal input. Even now, you are read-

ing the words of this minister probably hoping to glean some insight or truth to assist in your lesson study. The best I, or anyone can offer you is the reminder of whose Revelation it is.

God chose to reveal Himself to John. The Father had an important message to share with John, the churches of the region and believers of today as well. This act of revealing indicates God's

great love for people and His desire to commune with us. The only way we can know God is on His terms. When we love some-

one we want to know all about them and talk with them. Look at Scripture through this lens. Think of all the good times you have had because of a revealing. A letter of acceptance from a university, an engagement ring in small black box, a test indicating a new baby is on the way are all examples of major life events that were revealed to you. Scripture is the great unveiling of God's

love for us and His character. Scripture is a testimony to Christ. Jesus is the focus of divine revelation and should be also be the center of our teaching (Revelation 1:2).

Revelation 1:3 reminds us of the blessings and knowledge that can only come through the reading and study of this book. When some of you saw the table of contents a few weeks ago in your study guide, you may have panicked. Why is that? Is it because Revelation is a hard book to understand? Is it because you have trouble with the symbols and illustrations? Does Revelation scare you? Do you become baffled when others start talking about premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism? Maybe you can relate to the preacher I heard once say when it came to Revelation, he ascribed to the panmillennialism viewpoint, meaning it would all pan out in the end. Indeed it will, but why not be blessed and gain understanding along the way? Christ is coming and He is coming soon (Revelation 1:7). The last words in our text words belong to Jesus. You see, it's His Revelation. Let us hear what He has to say!

McKay is pastor of Harperville Church, Harperville.



Explore the Bible  
with Bobby McKay

## Return to God • Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-5, 10

Several years ago, our children's choir performed a fantastic music entitled, "Go Jonah, Go!" about the story of Jonah. I will never forget the child who played the part of Jonah. One of our most active, most aggravating, most likely to get thrown out of RA's, played the part of Jonah. In one scene, he had to run around the sanctuary while the choir sang, "Go, Go Jonah!" It was perfect casting since he regularly ran around the church anyway!

In the first part of the lesson, Jonah 1:1-3, God had spoken to Jonah to go and preach to the city of Nineveh. At the time of this story, Nineveh was a very wicked city. It was the capital of the Assyrian Empire and they were historically very wicked people. History tells us how that the Assyrians would maim their enemies in war. They were horribly cruel inflicting grotesque type of maiming processes upon the prisoners of war that they would take. So that history tells us that there were cities that when surrounded by the Assyrian army and doomed to fall that the inhabitants of the cities would all commit suicide. It was also a large city; in fact, the historians say was the largest city in the ancient world. So, quite possibly God

could have been sending Jonah to the largest, most wicked city known to man in the entire world.

What does Jonah do? Since Nineveh is east, He left in the opposite direction and caught a ship going west. He was running from the call of God. He caught a boat at Joppa, bound for Tarshish. Tarshish was the most remote outpost at that time. I believe when Jonah decided to ignore God's call, he did it in a big "honking" way—he was headed as far away as he can go.

Although the Scripture in this lesson does not include the rest of chapter 1 and 2, we know that Jonah was thrown overboard of the ship and was swallowed by a whale. It was during this time that Jonah called to the Lord and the Lord answered by commanding the fish to spit Jonah out onto dry land. His whole goal had been to escape the presence and conviction of God and yet,

in the place least expected...God was there. We cannot escape from the presence of God—no matter where we go or what we do—His presence will be there. He fills the entire universe—even the belly of a whale.

David the psalmist said, "If I ascend into heaven thou art there: if I descend into hell thou art there. If I take the

wings of the morning, and flee to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there You lead me" Psalm 139:8-10 (KJV). We

simply cannot go anywhere that God is not present.

Chapter 3 finds Jonah again hearing from God of the urgency to go to Nineveh. As he begins to preach of judgment of God, the Ninevites believed Jonah. They trusted his message. A fast was proclaimed and all of them from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth, to signify their repentance. God saw how

the people turned from their evil ways and did not destroy them as He had planned. His mercy and compassion were immediate when he saw the change in their hearts. Nineveh was saved!

**Walk:** Take some time today to spend in repentance. Ask God to reveal to you where your heart has strayed from His purposes and call.

**Run:** Who in your circle of influence needs a strong word from God? Pray and ask God to give you boldness to proclaim Him.

**Soar:** Know that friend of family member who is in a sinful lifestyle and their life is miserable from the effects of sin? Ask God what He would have you to do. If you feel His conviction (and only then), confront in love, with courage. Use your words to stimulate your friend of family member toward God.

And that wild child in the first paragraph I mentioned that played the part of Jonah? He and his new bride are faithfully exploring God's call on their lives...wherever that may be. They are willing to Go...even if it is to Nineveh.

Bowman is Minister of Connection, First Church, Brandon, and a speaker for women's events.



Bible Studies for Life  
with Beth S. Bowman



## SUDAN

cont. from p. 1

Sudan has been designated as a Country of Particular Concern by the U.S. State Department since 1999 for its treatment of Christians and other human rights violations. Sudan ranked sixth on Christian support organization Open Doors'

2015 World Watch List of 50 countries where Christians face most persecution.

According to Morning Star News, the charge of spying (Article 53 of the Sudanese Penal Code) lodged against the pair of pastors is punishable by death, life imprisonment, or prison and confiscation of property. The charge of promoting hatred among or against sects (Article

64) is punishable by up to two years in prison. The pastors are also charged with:

- undermining the constitutional system (Article 50), punishable by death, life imprisonment, or imprisonment and confiscation of property

- disclosure and obtaining information and official documents (Article 55), punishable by two years in prison or a fine.

- blasphemy/insulting religious creeds (Article 125), punishable by one year of imprisonment or a fine or no more than 40 lashes.

- disturbance of the public peace (Article 69), punishable by six months of prison, or a fine or no more than 20 lashes.

- joint acts in execution of a criminal conspiracy (Article 21). Harassment, arrests, and

persecution of Christians have intensified since the secession of South Sudan in July 2011, when Bashir vowed to adopt a stricter version of sharia (Islamic law) and recognize only Islamic culture and the Arabic language. Sudan's minister of guidance and endowments announced in April 2013 that no new licenses would be granted for building new churches in Sudan.

# Vacation Bible School



**EDGEFIELD CHURCH, MCCOOL:** 23 children attending, with 159 cans of food collected for missions.



**CALVARY CHURCH, SUMMIT:** June 15 - 19; overall average, 96, with 62 children; Kody Tullos, VBS director; Mike Burns, pastor.



**CALVARY CHURCH, PETAL:** June 8 - 12; 80 children attending with 68 volunteers; the boys collected the most money for missions and got to "silly string" the girls.



**CRUGER CHURCH, CRUGER:** June 22 - 26; 44 enrolled with 20 volunteers; two children accepted Christ as savior; Al Different, pastor.



**EVANSVILLE CHURCH, COTTONVILLE:** Fifteen children gave their lives to the Lord and were baptized.



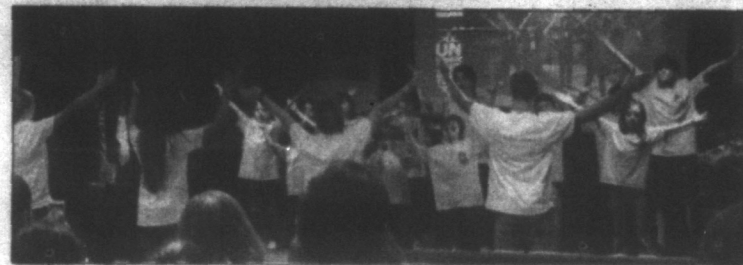
**GRACE UNITED CHURCH, DECATUR:** Gary Felton, pastor; shown are the participants.



**SYLVA RENA CHURCH, YALOBUSHA COUNTY:** Shane Crawford, pastor; Gale Caldwell, director. Shown are the participants.



**HICKORY GROVE CHURCH, LAMAR:** June 7 - 11; average attendance, 67 with an enrollment of 76.



**LONGVIEW CHURCH, STARKVILLE:** Family night. Shown are the children leading in worship.

## In other VBS News:

► Neshoba Church, Union: July 19 - 23, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.; commencement, Thurs., 7:30 p.m.

► Concord Church, Yazoo City: VBS day camp, July 18, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

► Ruth Church, Ruth: July 18, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.; ages, 3 years - 6th grade.



**NEW PROSPECT CHURCH, OLIVE BRANCH:** Shown are the participants.